

LOST RIVER.

A Story of True, Honest Love and Much Thrilling Adventure.

By JOSEPH ARTHUR.

Published exclusively by the Sunday Morning Globe. This story is founded on Mr. Arthur's successful play, "Lost River," under the direction of Jules Murry.

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CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERY.

"Whose picture did you say this was?" faltered Blessing.

"Thomas Jones's, Ora's father. The man who married my daughter and then left her to die alone, for fear of offendin' his rich folks back in New York. That's him. That's Thomas Jones. And a good likeness it was—twenty years ago."

But Bob Blessing scarcely heeded her. He was saying over and over to himself:

"By all that's wonderful, is it Thomas Middleton, my partner—Glady's father. Now I begin to understand why he opposed our taking this Lost River contract; why he has never come out here in person, and why he objected at first to Claude and Glady's coming."

Then a new thought occurred to him.

"That story doesn't sound like Middleton. If it is true, I believe he acted as he did through cowardice rather than from villainy. He would probably be glad to make amends if he knew Ora was living. He will be at Lost River week after next to look over the aqueduct and bring the men's back pay. Can't I bring about a meeting?"

The idea took hold of his imagination.

"Mrs. Gates," he said aloud, "an old friend of mine—my partner, Mr. Middleton, in fact—is coming to our hotel week after next. There is to be a hop there the evening he arrives. Won't you do me the favor of coming to the dance and bring Miss Ora with you?"

"Never!"

"What?"

"Never! I say! It was at such a hop as that, up to the hotel, that my

Meantime Claude was busy explaining to Bob.

"You see," he said, "it was this way: Miss Ora introduced me to a jolly little girl named Angie Volmer—a friend of hers. It seems Ezra Cookus is sweet on Angie, just as our friend Bill seems to be on Miss Ora. The two fellows came along looking for trouble. And I guess they found it all right. They rushed me. I side-stepped and then was all over them. I handed out a bunch of uppercuts to Ezra and he ran, with me after him. He hid somewhere and I came back to finish the other one!"

"Claude!" called Gladys from the door, "the horses are ready. Take me back to the hotel."

"If you insist on going," said Bob, "I'll take you."

"No, thank you," sneered Gladys. "I'll leave you here with your 'Madonna in the Sunbonnet.' Claude will go with me."

"I say, Bob!" whispered Claude as he and his sister were about to start, "You'd better follow pretty quickly. I don't like the look that Loucks fellow gave you. Look out for him. He may get back at you."

"Don't worry!" laughed Blessing. "I fancy I can handle either or both of those worthies."

He turned back into the room to find Ora weeping bitterly.

"Don't cry," he begged. "It's only Miss Middleton's ways, that's all. She may change her tune before long. He added under his breath:

"Taint that," sobbed Ora. "It's only I'm so ashamed of Bill and Ezra actin' up like that when there was company."

"Don't think of it. We'll have a jolly dinner after all, you and grandma and I."

"No, no! You mustn't wait. A thunder storm is comin' up, and, besides, Bill and Ezra may— They'd be two to one against you. Go now while you have time. You've got your wheel there at the gate. Take the towpath along the river. That's the shortest way back to the hotel."

"And leave you unprotected, eh? No, thanks!"

The girl walked over to the stove and lifted the kettle, with its boiling contents.

"I'm not so unprotected as I look," she said. "This'll hold Bill for a while I guess. And anyhow, it's not me he'd

harm. It's you. You've made him hate you. Look out for him!"

"If I'll go now will you promise to persuade your grandmother to bring you to the hop at the hotel, week after next?"

"Yes," promised the girl, viewing the approaching storm with alarm. "But go!"

"Then good-by, little girl!" and he stooped and kissed her hand before mounting his wheel.

As he sped away in the gathering gloom a second figure crawled from behind the cottage, sprang on a bicycle and followed him.

Quick as the pursuer was, Ora's keen eyes saw him.

"Bill Loucks!" she exclaimed to herself. "He'll overtake Mr. Blessing on that lonely towpath!"

For a moment she stood resolute. Then she ran quickly indoors, emerging an instant later with a rifle under her arm.

Hurrying to where her bicycle stood she mounted and dashed down the towpath in pursuit.

The storm broke in all its fury.

The rain fell in —, while crash after crash of thunder shook the whole earth.

From time to time the pitchy darkness was lighted up by a blinding lightning flare.

One of these flashes revealed the towpath, with Bob Blessing pedalling ahead, head down and eyes straining to trace the indistinct track.

A second flash revealed another wheelman close behind, gaining at every second on the foremost rider.

The pursuer's front wheel slowly overlapped Blessing's rear wheel.

Yet in the deafening roar of thunder and rain Bob did not hear him.

The pursuer's right arm was at last raised above Bob's bent shoulders.

A long, wicked-looking knifeblade gleamed in the lightning.

Before it could reach its mark a third rider appeared, but too far behind to warn Blessing of his danger.

The girl, seeing her voice would be drowned in the uproar of the storm, raised her rifle and fired.

A crash of thunder drowned the report.

Bill Loucks fell from his wheel and lay motionless among the wayside bushes.

Bob Blessing, all unheeding his narrow escape from death, rode on.

(To be continued.)

In the current chapter of "Lost River" the "Missing Word" blank is given. Fill in the following with your guesses:

The River Nile, in Egypt, is famous for its —

and crocodiles. Travelers descend on these two features of the great river.

Ten reserved seats to the drama which will be at the Academy the week commencing November 25, will be given the first ten correct answers.

Sunday Morning Globe, 1223 Pennsylvania avenue.

BENEDICT GORDON.

By REVERE RODGERS.

[Written for the Sunday Globe.]

CHAPTER I.

In the fast-deepening twilight of an evening in the early part of April, two men alighted from the cars at Rockville, and after giving a hurried look about them immediately struck off in the direction of the bustling little city of Georgetown.

Both men were roughly clad, and wore their hats well down upon their faces as if to avoid recognition from any chance wayfarer. The shorter of the two men was a coarse, brutal-looking fellow, with sloping shoulders, and great powerful limbs that spoke of vast physical strength and endurance; his short bull-like neck was collarless, and his striped shirt, open at the front, displayed to view a hairy animal-like chest. His age might have been thirty-two or three, but his herculean build made him appear somewhat older, as is often the case with men of large make. He strode along at a swinging pace, with his neck craned low, and his arms hanging loosely by his sides. His massive jaws marked him as a man of determination, while his bulging forehead and deep set eyes showed him to be a man of evil and brutish propensities.

His companion, who appeared to have great difficulty in keeping abreast of him, was a trifle above the average height and of a strong athletic make, though not stoutly built. He was dressed much the same as his ruggedly built companion, but from a general air of gentility that hovered about the man, his garments seemed to have been selected more as a means of disguise than for any preference the wearer could have had in the matter. Aside from a sneer that seemed to constantly hang about the man's face, he might have been considered good looking, even handsome. He appeared to be a trifle younger than his companion, and in different clothes, would have easily been mistaken for a gentleman, such as the world accepts the meaning of the term.

The two men trudged along in silence for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when finally the younger one with an oath, remarked upon the roughness of the road.

"Aye," replied the other, gruffly, "Rough it is, but it'll be a d—mn sight rougher afore we're there, so get a move on you, Saunders, and come on."

"Oh, it is all right for you to say, come on," answered the one addressed as Saunders in a sulky voice as he limped along, "but you know I am not exactly used to these pedestrian exercises, Ross."

"If you ain't used to it," said Ross surlily, "you'll have to get used to it, and what I say to you is to come on, if you want to get there tonight."

"Yes, but hang it all, man," expostulated Saunders, limping painfully in his endeavor to keep up with his faster companion. "I tell you I am not used to this devilish way you have of getting over ground. I am fagged out now with tramping through this blasted muck and mire," he added, falling back into a slower pace, while his companion did the same.

"Now, look here Mr. Saunders," sneered the man Ross, as he accommodated his stride to suit that of his companion. "If the job's to be done at all, it's got to be done afore one o'clock, so we'll have plenty of time to get under cover afterwards."

"I know that," said Saunders in a petulant tone of voice, "but hang it all man you run on like a veritable steam engine, we will get there before one o'clock without the necessity of this race-horse gait, won't we?"

"But that ain't the thing," said Ross, with an impatient toss of his head, "what we want is to have plenty of time to look over the premises afore we get down to business."

"Well, I cannot go any faster than I am going now," remonstrated Saunders with an oath, "and what's more I am not going to try. It is a nice situation anyhow, for a man of my position to be placed in," he added with a half fearful glance at his companion.

"A man of your what?" growled Ross, as he spat contemptuously.

"I said a man of my position," repeated Saunders. "Here I am," he proceeded speaking rapidly, "the only son of rich parents, who never let a wish of mine remain ungratified; extensively educated, an entree into the best society and always enjoyed the best things this life offered, to be found at this day tramping along a d—mn muddy road, in company with a—"

"In company with a crook, is that what you were going to say, partner?" interrupted Ross with an ugly leer upon his brutal countenance, "is that your idea? If it is partner, don't mind me, but speak right out, cause I'll all attention, sony," he added stopping suddenly and turning about so as to face his companion.

"Oh," said Saunders, with an impatient toss of his head, "I did not say that Ross, but consider the matter yourself, doesn't it seem strange to you, that a man who has been reared as I have been must at last find it necessary to resort to robbery in order to keep up his end among his friends? I don't know how it may seem to you, but hang me if it don't seem pretty rough on me," he added as he thrust his hands down deep into his trousers pockets, and glanced inquiringly at his companion.

"Now, see here, Saunders," cried Ross, angrily, facing about in the road, "If you keep up this d—mn baby business, I'll throw the whole thing up, and I'll tell you now once for all, I'm a thief and I makes my living at it, a thief I don't allow no man to tell me so to my face. Now you comes to me and says that you know a place where a couple of men might make a rich haul, and you asks me to go partners. So I asks you a few questions and considers that the job can be done easily, and with very little risk, and I ups and clinches the matter with you: believing that you would act the man right along. Now you've ben throwing up your family and your 'raising' to me, all along, and d—mn me if I ain't tired of it. According to you, your people's all dead, and you've

'blowed' the money they left you, and now you wants more, and you takes this way of getting it. Now if you mean to keep up this here whining, I'm goin' to cry quits, and pull out. If you don't and still wants me to help you do the trick, what I says is to come on," with this last sentence, the burly ruffian pulled his hat further down upon his eyes and strode rapidly forward.

"But I say, Ross," cried Saunders, with difficulty keeping up with him, "how much farther have we to go anyway? Hang me if I'm not completely bewildered at the route you have selected and what place is that?" he hurriedly exclaimed, as twinkling lights were discernible at a distance through the trees.

"That's Bethesda," replied Ross, in a low voice, clutching his companion's arm to enforce silence, "and we had better turn off here, so's to keep out of sight of anybody who might be stirring about." Without another word both men plunged into the deep woods, that skirted the pretty little village of Bethesda, and cautiously picked their way forward.

"We must be close to Tennyaltown by this time, ain't we?" inquired Saunders, after they had once more emerged into the road.

"Tennyaltown's a mile and a half further on," said Ross, "and the lane is a good two miles from there, and yet you poke along like a terrapin." To this rebuff, Saunders did not reply, and the two men trudged along in silence, until they came to the outskirts of Tennyaltown. Here they made a wide detour back of Fort Reno and came out on the Woody Lane Road.

(To be continued.)

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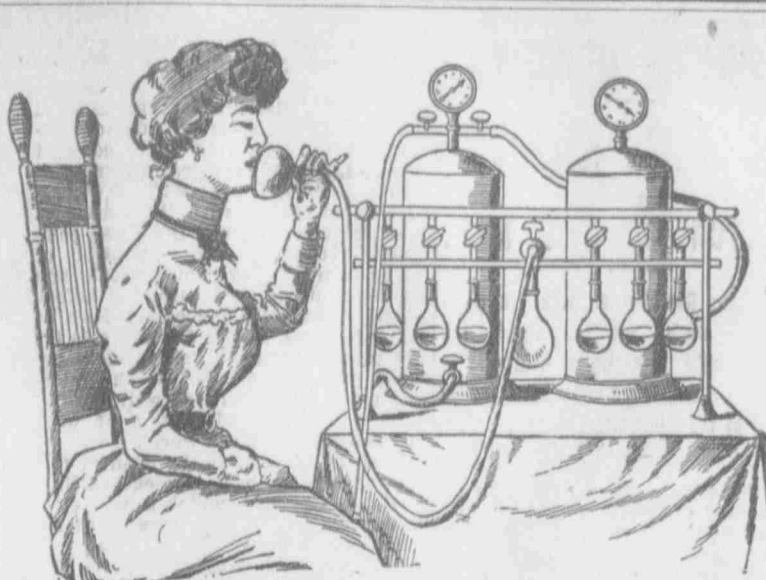
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